

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

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TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: BALUCHISTAN: PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY HOLDS THREE MEETINGS

REF: (A) KARACHI 0238

(B) LAHORE 0173 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING MEETINGS ON FEBRUARY 2 AND 4 BALUCHISTAN ASSEMBLY WAS PROROGUED AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 5. WITH SEVEN MEMBERS ABSENT FROM SESSIONS, CURRENT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MAINTAINED NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY DURING SESSION. SESSION HANDLED ONLY ROUTINE BUSINESS, DISPOSED OF VARIOUS MOTIONS AND WAS PROROGUED PRIOR TO DEBATE ON LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN PROVINCE. GOVERNOR AND CHIEF MINISTER HAVE DEPARTED FOR RAWALPINDI WHERE THEY EXPECTED TO MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER. END SUMMARY

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1. APPARENT DOMINANCE OF IN'S: AT FEBRUARY 2 SESSION

EIGHT MEMBERS SAT ON GOVERNMENT SIDE WHILE FOUR OCCUPIED OPPOSITION BENCHES. ON FEBRUARY 4 MAHMUD KHAN ACKAKZAI, WHO DECISIVELY WON ELECTION TO SEAT OF HIS DECEASED FATHER, WAS SWORN IN AND SAT WITH THE GOVERNMENT SHIFTING BALANCE TO 9-4. WITH FIVE MEMBERS OUT OF ACTION BECAUSE OF DETENTION OR DISQUALIFICATION (REFTEL A) AND TWO MEMBERS ABSENT, IN'S WERE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR DOMINANT POSITION. YOUNG ACKAKZAI, ELECTED AS INDEPENDENT WITH PPP ENDORSEMENT, AS EXPECTED CAST LOT WITH GOVERNMENT, BUT SOME OBSERVERS QUESTION HOW LONG THIS AFFILIATION WILL LAST. FORMER GOVERNOR AKBAR BUTGI'S SON-IN-LAW, CHAKAR KHAN DOMBKI, WAS ABSENT WHILEBUGTI'S MAN AMWAR JAN KETHRAN SAT WITH GOVERNMENT. DEPARTURE IMMEDIATELY AFTER SESSION OF GOVERNOR AND CHIEF MINISTER FOR ISLAMABAD AND TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTS POLITICAL MANEUVERS CONTINUE.

2. NO GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS: DURING SESSION ASSEMBLY ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE OTHER THAN SATISFACTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT AND RATIFICATION OF ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY PROMULGATED. ON FIRST DAY, QUESTION WHETHER MEMBERS COULD CARRY ARMS INTO ASSEMBLY PRODUCED CONTROVERSY AND WALKOUT BY OPPOSITION WHEN OPPOSITION LEADER AHMAD NAWAZ BUGTI QUESTIONED BASIS FOR SPEAKER'S ORDER THAT HE LEAVE HIS GUN OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY HALL. AMENDED RULES OF PROCEDURE WERE ALSO PASSED. AHMAD NAWAZ BUGTI AND LADY MEMBER FAZLIA ALIANI WERE FOREMOST OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN AND AHMAD NAWAZ WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF ASSEMBLY'S PROROGUING PRIOR TO PROMISED DEBATE ON LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN PROVINCE.

3. PRE-SESSION MANEUVERS: RIGHT UP TO CONVENING OF SESSION POLITICAL MANEUVERING REFTTEL A) CONTINUED. JANUARY 31 PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO MET SEPARATELY WITH BALUCHISTAN MPA'S RAISANI AND SHAHLIANI IN JACOBABAD. SHAHLIANI, AN INDEPENDENT WHO LATER SHIFTED TO PPP AND NOW RUMORED TO BE DRIFTING AWAY FROM PPP, APPARENTLY GOT MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER SINCE DURING SESSION HE SAT ON GOVERNMENT SIDE. SCHEDULED JANUARY 31 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON BALUCHISTAN WAS POSTPONED. PROPERTY OF NAP MPA ABDUR REHMAN WAS CONFISCATED AND HE AWARDED FIVE YEARS RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT. NIGHT OF JANUARY 30-31 HAND GRENADES WERE TOSSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTO QUETTA COMPOUNDS OF PPP MPA PARACHA AND PPP CANDIDATE FOR KHAIR BUX MARRI'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT, TAJ MOHAMMAD JAMALI. NO PERSONAL INJURIES RESULTED. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO STATED IN LAHORE ON FEBRUARY 1 HE WOULD MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON BALUCHISTAN FEBRUARY 12 (REFTEL B).

4. ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION OF BALUCHISTAN RUMORED: ACCOUNTS ARE APPEARING IN LOCAL PRESS THAT PREVIOUS ADMINIS-

TRATIVE DIVISION OF BALUCHISTAN INTO TWO DIVISIONS (QUETTA AND KALAT) UNDER COMMISSIONERS, WHICH WERE ABOLISHED FOLLOWING ADVENT OF BHUTTO REGIME IN AUGUST 1972, MAY BE REESTABLISHED. PURPORTED SCHEME MIGHT ALSO INCLUDE CREATION OF TWO NEW DISTRICTS IN ADDITION TO PRESENT TEN WHICH WOULD ENCOMPASS DISTURBED MARRI AND MENGAL AREAS. SUGGESTION IS THAT MENGAL AND MARRI AREAS WOULD BE ADMINISTERED BY POLITICAL AGENTS WITH LOCAL AFFAIRS LARGELY IN HANDS OF TRADITIONAL LOCAL LEADERS (SARDARS).

5. COMMENT: SHORT ASSEMBLY SESSION PRODUCED NO SURPRISING DEVELOPMENTS OTHER THAN TO DEMONSTRATE ONCE MORE THAT POSITION OF IN'S CAN BE MAINTAINED BY MANIPULATION. SOME SORT OF PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION (PARA 4) MIGHT POSSIBLY EVOLVE AS PART OF LARGER POLITICAL PACKAGE. AN APPARENT STEP BACKWARD ADMINISTRATIVELY TO A SYSTEM AKIN TO THAT IN VOGUE IN EARLIER DAYS MIGHT PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK WITH FLEXIBILITY TO ACCOMMODATE BALUCH ASPIRATIONS IN WHICH AT SAME TIME POLITICAL AGENT COULD REPRESENT AND PROTECT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INTERESTS. DECONTROL ON RECEIPT.

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